Title: The ₹8,000 Illusion: How Digital Astrology Platforms are Exploiting Desperate Indians

Platform: Youth Ki Awaaz / The Quint (My Report) / Medium **Author:** The Digital Consumer Watchdog Group

When you lose your job, your first instinct is panic. Your second is to look for hope. In India, that hope is increasingly being sold through smartphone apps and websites promising astrological salvation. But what happens when that hope is a highly priced, corporate mirage?

Our team at The Digital Consumer Watchdog Group recently concluded a deep-dive investigation into the ₹60,000 crore digital astrology industry. What we found was not spiritual guidance, but a systematic, predatory business model designed to extract maximum wealth from vulnerable people.

To understand this, we need to look at a prominent case study: **Lunar Astro**, founded by **Deepanshu Giri**.

The "Bait and Switch"

Lunar Astro has built a massive following, largely driven by the personal brand of its founder. Consumers, trusting this brand, are willing to pay exorbitant fees for consultations. How exorbitant? Up to ₹8,000 for a mere 15-minute phone call.

But here is the catch: you are rarely speaking to the master you thought you were paying for.

According to verified public grievances, such as a detailed July 2024 review on the consumer forum MouthShut, clients are routinely handed off to anonymous, junior trainees. The reviewer noted: *"The consultation is provided by very amateur astrologers who are learning at our expense. They are trying to capitalise on the name of Deepanshu Giri but have zero experience."*

The Cost of False Predictions

Astrology is a matter of faith, but consumer fraud is a matter of law. In the aforementioned case, the consumer paid the ₹8,000 premium seeking career advice. The amateur astrologer confidently predicted a "job change" by April 30, 2024.

The reality? The consumer was laid off on that exact date.

While predictions can be wrong, the corporate response to this failure is what crosses the line into alleged exploitation. When the devastated consumer reached out to the Lunar Astro grievance team for a proper reading or a refund, they were met with absolute silence. No phone response. No email response. They took the ₹8,000, delivered an amateur, inaccurate service, and ghosted the client.

A Call for Accountability

This is not an isolated incident. It is a business model. Platforms use famous faces to justify premium pricing, outsource the labor to cheap trainees, and utilize strict "no refund" policies to trap the consumer's money.

It is time for the Ministry of Consumer Affairs to step in. We need mandatory disclosures of practitioner qualifications before payment, and strict grievance redressal mechanisms. Until then, consumers must be warned: do not let unregulated platforms turn your life's crises into their profit margins.

If you have been affected by similar practices, report it to the National Consumer Helpline and share your story.